

Abstract

For the purpose of reducing a false report and shortening inspection time, an area to be inspected is locally inspected under optimum inspection conditions. In order to avoid the number of detected defects from increasing explosively, and thereby to facilitate control of a critical defect, general-purpose layout data, which is used for producing a mask of a semiconductor wafer, is accumulated in a design information server 2. With reference to the layout data, an area to be inspected, which is inspected by a pattern inspecting apparatus 1, is divided into partial inspection areas including a cell portion and a non-cell portion. Inspection parameters are set for each of the partial inspection areas. In addition, the defect reviewing apparatus 8 obtains an inspection result of the pattern inspecting apparatus 1. When obtaining a defect image, the defect reviewing apparatus 8 identifies a position, where the defect occurred, from among a cell portion, a non-cell portion, a pattern dense portion, and the like according to layout data. Moreover, the defect reviewing apparatus 8 sets inspection parameters, such as pickup magnification of this defect, in response to a result of the identification to set a control criterion of criticality.